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Naval Station Mayport Branch Clinic Breaks Ground
By Loren A. Barnes, Naval Hospital Jacksonville
MAYPORT, Fla. - Representatives from Naval Station Mayport and Navy Medicine put shovels in the dirt recently to break ground for the new Branch Medical Clinic at Naval Station Mayport.
The \$16.5 million, 102,000 square foot building will house both the medical and dental clinic. It will take about 18 months to complete and is expected to open in 2004.

The current, smaller and outdated building serves about 50,000 beneficiaries, including family members and retirees. During the construction, many services will be relocated to trailers set up in the area.

The Mayport BMC groundbreaking was just the latest in several facility construction projects underway for Naval Hospital Jacksonville designed to provide better service for Jacksonville area beneficiaries and a better working environment for staff.

At Naval Air Station Jacksonville, the Branch Clinic recently completed a \$3.6 million expansion that includes space for medical administration, preventive medicine, Naval Air Reserve Medical, and Naval Dental Center Southeast Region Command. The existing building will be rehabilitated to include health care provider's offices and examination rooms, two new dental surgical operatives, and increased periodontic and endodontic spaces.

On the drawing board is a new satellite pharmacy planned for the Jacksonville Navy Exchange parking lot to be completed in 2003.

At Naval Hospital Jacksonville, 115 additional parking spaces have been added, and a former vacant barracks located behind the hospital is being renovated for administrative and education functions.

Plans are underway to expand the labor and delivery and intensive care units and the Naval Hospital's operating rooms. The Hospital Emergency Department also just completed a major

renovation.

Construction was begun on Mar. 20 at Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Albany, Ga., for a new \$4,700,000, 27,000 square-foot clinic, which will also fall under Naval Hospital Jacksonville's supervision.

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Navy Medicine Strengthening Leadership Disaster Response Skills
By CDR Mary Chaffee, NC, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON, DC - A new training program will help Navy Medicine health care executives learn how to best cope with a major disaster or public health crisis.

"The Health Care Leadership Training Program for Response to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Disaster" will prepare military treatment facility senior leadership how to best respond during major emergencies or disasters. Civilian health care leaders, academic institutions and the military services, including Navy Medicine, partnered to develop the curriculum.

Beginning in January 2003, the three-and-a-half-day course will be offered twice a month at the U.S. Public Health Service's Noble Training Center in Anniston, Ala. The center is the only hospital facility in the U.S. devoted entirely to medical training for weapons of mass destruction.

"This program fills a gap in our preparedness and will ensure that MTF commanders and their teams are optimally prepared to provide outstanding leadership during disasters," RADM Philip VanLandingham, MSC, director of the Navy Medicine Office of Homeland Security, said. "It is a powerful partnership among the military services, civilian health care leaders, and academic institutions that demonstrates our commitment to working together effectively during emergency situations."

While many courses are available to prepare clinicians and first responders to cope with biological and other types of terrorism and disasters, there are currently few training opportunities for health care executives who must lead a hospital's disaster response.

CAPT Rob Darling, MC; CDR Mary Chaffee, NC; CDR Reggie McNeil, MSC; and LCDR Karin Warner, NC; experts in emergency preparedness and training, spent two days at the Noble Center with other experts from the military, civilian and academic communities to develop the comprehensive curriculum. Leading the program's development is the National Health Professions Preparedness Consortium, comprised of two medical schools and a school of nursing. It is being funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Emergency Preparedness, the agency responsible for domestic health and medical services disaster response in a Federally-declared disaster.

Additional information on the program, including attendance information for MTF leadership, will be available later this summer. For more information, contact Chaffee at the Navy Medicine Office of Homeland Security, mwchaffee@us.med.navy.mil.

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Jacksonville To Offer Vision Improving Surgery

By Loren A. Barnes, Naval Hospital Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Sailors who pocketed their glasses because they turned opaque from fog and sea spray know how limiting, even dangerous, those "windows to the world" can be under adverse weather conditions.

Naval Hospital Jacksonville's ophthalmology department will soon help these eyeglass-wearing Sailors by offering a state-of-the-art vision-improving procedure to qualified command-authorized active duty patients.

The hospital will offer photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), one of three popular surgical procedures currently used to correct near-sightedness, according CAPT David Davis, MC, ophthalmologist at Naval Hospital Jacksonville.

PRK uses a special laser that delivers pulses of energy to remove a small disc-shaped sliver of the central cornea. The surface layer of the cornea must also be removed, but it grows back after a few days.

This year, Naval Hospital Jacksonville is funded to do about 250 to 400 PRK procedures on 125 to 200 people. Davis said the hospital is initially leasing the equipment, avoiding the outlay of \$500,000 if it were purchased outright. By later this month five ophthalmologists will be doing PRK.

Davis said offering PRK to active duty servicemembers is a boon to warfighting readiness, one that may save lives. He explained that there are very real dangers to having people in a combat situation wearing glasses or contact lenses.

"Weapons aim, situational awareness and focus can be significantly impeded for people with glasses or contact lenses," he said. "In the heat of battle, they may unexpectedly have to deal with fogged or dirt flecked glasses hindering their vision. Glasses can also be knocked or blown off. G-forces can send glasses flying in the cockpit and troops can lose them during rappelling. Glasses are hard to get into gas masks, firefighting equipment and breathing apparatus."

Davis also said that contact lenses can soak up chemical agents, and dirty contact lenses can lead to serious eye infections.

He said corrected vision is also a career issue for some military members.

"For instance, there's the aviator for whom the Navy has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of training. He reaches 35, is about to take command of a squadron, and he finds he can't pass the flight physical because of near-sightedness," said Davis. "This procedure can be a career-saver for that aviator."

By the end of the year 2002, Navy Medicine will have six clinics offering the vision-correcting surgery. They are National Naval Medical Center Bethesda; Naval Medical Centers Portsmouth and San Diego; and Naval Hospitals Camp Lejeune, Bremerton and Jacksonville.

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Family Practice Residents Graduate At Pensacola

By Rod Duren, Naval Hospital Pensacola

PENSACOLA, Fla. - The 28th graduating class of Naval Hospital

Pensacola's family practice residency program is the first since the Vietnam era to graduate while America is at war.

"Your performance is extremely important to our nation at this juncture in history," Navy Surgeon General VADM Michael L. Cowan, MC, told the nine graduating family practitioners and 11 interns.

"A new page in history is being written and you will be part of it," Cowan. "Be proud to wear the cloth of our nation."

Navy Medicine serves all across the globe, he said, from Kandahar, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to the branch clinics at Gulfport, Miss., Millington, Tenn., and Pensacola.

"I'm so proud to be your Surgeon General," he told the residents. "I'm a 30-year (military) veteran, but I've never been prouder than having the opportunity to serve with you in Navy Medicine."

Pensacola will celebrate 30 years as a teaching hospital next month. The program began in August 1972 and the first graduating class was in June 1974.

While in Pensacola, Cowan also visited Naval Operational Medicine Institute and Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory. He also toured proposed sites for a new Navy medical clinic, and proposed Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense clinic at Naval Technical Training Center Corry Station, Fla.

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Nosek, Dreyer Named Navy Pharmacists of the Year

LCDR Ronald Nosek, MSC, National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md., and LT Jody Dreyer, MSC, now at Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Fla., have been named Navy Medicine's pharmacists of the year for 2001.

Each year Navy Medicine presents a senior level and junior level award to pharmacists to recognize their innovation in the practice of pharmacy, military bearing, contributions to the member's command, and contributions specific to Navy pharmacy advancement.

"Although receiving this award makes me feel good to know that others recognized me, I feel it's a reflection of the outstanding people I've worked with at NNMC," said Nosek.

"Being stationed at NNMC has allowed me to do more interesting jobs and have more experiences than anywhere else because of the opportunities of being attached to a medical center and hospital ship, and having close working relations with other branches of service."

Dreyer was recognized as the junior pharmacist of 2001 for his work at Naval Medical Center San Diego. He has since transferred to Naval Hospital Jacksonville.

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Snapshot of Navy Medicine

Navy Medicine statistics as of Apr. 2, 2002:

- Medical Corps officers: 4,009
- Dental Corps officers: 1,310
- Medical Service Corps officers: 2,662
- Nurse Corps officers: 3,133
- Hospital Corpsmen: 23,335

- Dental Technicians: 3,411
 - Naval Reserve medical personnel: 9,942
 - Civilian personnel: 10,778
 - Navy Treatment Facilities: 31 (does not include branch clinics)
 - Navy Dental Treatment Facilities: 15 (does not include branch clinics)
 - Fleet Hospitals: 10 (6 active duty, 4 Naval Reserve)
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Overseas TRICARE Beneficiaries Tickled about Hotline
 By Bill Doughty, U. S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Overseas? Far from home? The Health Care Information Hotline can help.

The HCIL - a TRICARE benefit - is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for active duty service members and their families who want health care advice.

Families and individuals stationed in Japan, for example, can speak with a stateside nurse for the price of a local call, according to LT Dan Clark, NC, staff nurse at Branch Medical Clinic in Sasebo, part of U. S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan.

"No matter what time of day it is or where you are, you can call and speak to a nurse instead of having to come in to the clinic during regular clinic hours," said Clark.

He advises TRICARE beneficiaries to be patient the first time they call the HCIL. The caller will have to push a few numbers on their phone to get through and get registered.

"It takes two or three minutes," said Clark. "But you'll get on line with a nurse. And the beautiful thing is, once you're registered you can call the HCIL line again. They will already have your name and what you called for, what kind of treatment was administered, and what kind of recommendations were given."

When calling the HCIL, beneficiaries should be prepared to give their symptoms and their temperature. They may be asked how long they've had their symptoms, treatments they have tried, and whether they have any allergies.

The HCIL nurse can give advice on what else callers can try and help decide when to see a health care provider. The HCIL helps callers determine if they have a condition requiring urgent care and can follow up by sending a consult form to the nearest military treatment facility, if necessary.

According to Clark, the HCIL is also helpful for people who just want health information.

"If you don't necessarily want to talk to a nurse, but just want information, you can call and get a list of dozens of health topics," he said. "Punch in the numbers and listen or you can even ask for information to be sent to you by mail."

HCIL is another tool to keep military beneficiaries healthy and ready. Overseas beneficiaries should contact their nearest TRICARE office for the hotline number for you.

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Healthwatch: Get Your "Five-a-Day" the Grillin' Way
 By Kay Blakely, Special to the American Forces Press Service

When it comes to grilling, most of us think of steaks, chops, chicken, or ribs. But you're missing out on some of the best eating of the season if you fail to include fresh vegetables grilled right alongside your main dish.

Grilling's a perfect way to make sure you get the recommended five servings from the fruit and vegetable food group each day. And sometimes, the vegetables can even be the main dish. Such is the case with portobello mushrooms, which are so large and meaty they are often considered the "steaks" of the mushroom family.

Almost any vegetable you would normally steam, boil or sauté can be cooked on the grill. Potatoes, zucchini and yellow squash, sweet peppers, onions, any kind of mushroom, fresh corn grilled in the husk, even tomatoes, are all prime candidates. Cabbage cooked on the grill develops a delicious sweetness I've never been able to duplicate by any other cooking method. Even though I'm normally not fond of eggplant, I love it cooked on the grill.

Try your hand at vegetable grilling and you're sure to come up with a few of your own favorites as well. Grilling is easy, and success is almost guaranteed as long as you keep a few tips in mind:

- Grill vegetables over a medium-to-hot fire. A charcoal fire is ready when the coals are completely covered in gray ash, usually about 30 minutes after the fire is lit.

- Vegetables can be halved, quartered or cut into rounds, but the trick is to cut all pieces roughly the same thickness (no thicker than 3/4s to 1 inch) so the veggies will cook evenly.

- Be careful not to overcook. Depending on the vegetable and its thickness, a total grilling time of two to five minutes per side is sufficient.

- Brushing vegetables with olive oil or vegetable oil will keep them from sticking to the grill. And certain items, such as asparagus, eggplant and cob corn, will benefit from a 30-minute soak in cold water prior to grilling.

- If you plan to use wooden skewers for kebabs, be sure to soak them in water to prevent smoldering or flaming once they reach the grill.

- For small vegetables that would fall through the grate, either use a hinged grill pan or cook them wrapped in foil.

Once you have a bit of experience under your belt, knowing the specific handling required for each kind of vegetable will become easy. If you're trying it for the first time, though, the following list will probably come in handy. It's a good one to clip and save in your recipe box for reference.

Asparagus: Trim off the tough lower ends and soak in cold water for 30 minutes to an hour if the stalks are a bit wilted. Pat dry, then place directly over the coals, turning every minute or so. Remove when the tips begin to turn brown. (These are really good!)

Bell peppers: Cut peppers in half, top to bottom. Remove stems, seeds and whitish ribs. Cut into strips about 2 inches wide; brush lightly with oil and grill 2-3 minutes per side. Or leave the peppers whole and grill until completely blackened.

Close the hot peppers in a plastic bag while they cool for 10-15 minutes, then peel off the blackened skin. The crusty skin comes off easily, but it's a messy job. Split open and remove seeds.

Eat as antipasto with oil and vinegar, or use in any recipe that calls for roasted peppers.

Cabbage: Cut a large head of green cabbage into 4-8 wedges and remove the core. Sprinkle wedges with garlic powder, salt and pepper and generously dot with butter. Arrange wedges back together, as if a whole head again, and wrap tightly in heavy-duty aluminum foil or a double layer of regular foil. Grill over medium coals for 45 minutes to an hour or until tender. After the required cooking time, leave the wrapping intact and move to the back of the grill to keep warm while other menu items finish cooking.

Carrots: Use full size carrots, but not too big - the smaller ones are best. Brush with olive oil and cook over medium to low coals until tender, or brown over higher heat and move to a cooler portion of the grill to finish. They will take at least 10 to 15 minutes to cook.

Corn on the cob: Gently pull back the husks, but don't remove them. Remove the silks and cut off the very tip of the cob. Soak in cold water for about 30 minutes. Pat dry and brush generously with butter. Fold the husks back down and tie or twist the ends to secure. Place over medium coals for about 5 to 8 minutes, turning often to avoid burning. Keep warm on the back of the grill, away from direct heat, while the remainder of the meal is being grilled.

Eggplant: Slice larger varieties into rounds about 3/8-inch thick; smaller versions can be sliced in half lengthwise. Brush with olive oil and grill until they start to brown, about 5 minutes per side. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar or serve with an Italian salsa verde (garlic, basil, parsley and tomatoes - all fresh and all chopped; add salt and extra virgin olive oil to taste).

Garlic: Take whole bulbs and cut off the root end. Brush with olive oil and place cut side down over a hot fire. Grill for about 10 minutes or until the skin is brown.

Mushrooms: Clean and remove stems. Toss in a bowl with oil, then thread on metal or wooden skewers, or spread them loosely over the grill if they are large enough. Grill 4-5 minutes for small mushrooms and 6-8 minutes for larger ones.

Onions: Sweet varieties such as Vidalias are best, but any onion will do. Peel and slice onions about 1/2-inch thick, brush with oil and grill about 3-5 minutes per side. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar, if desired. Onions can also be quartered or chunked and threaded on a skewer with other vegetables for a nice kebab.

Tomatoes: Cut in half top to bottom. Grill cut side down about 2- 3 minutes.

Potatoes: Wash and dry whole potatoes. Rub with vegetable oil. Wrap in aluminum foil and grill 35-40 minutes or longer, turning occasionally. To test for doneness, squeeze gently with a hand protected by an oven mitt. When they give to gentle pressure, they are done. Or, place small new potatoes and fresh green beans on a large square of aluminum foil, dot generously with butter, and season with salt and pepper. Wrap tightly, folding edges of foil securely to prevent butter leaking. Grill for 35-40 minutes. Thick slices of potato can also be grilled directly on the grate. Brush with oil, season with salt and pepper, and cook for about 3 minutes per side.

Zucchini (or any other summer squash): Small squash can be halved lengthwise, large ones should be cut into 1/2-inch thick rounds. Brush with olive oil and grill 2-3 minutes per side. Use a hot fire so they cook quickly and stay firm, but watch carefully so they don't burn.

All of this is so simple, you really don't need to follow a specific recipe. So get grilling and enjoy.

- Blakely is the consumer advocate in Defense Commissary Agency Europe.

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